



**BILL RICHARDSON**  
GOVERNOR

*State of New Mexico*  
**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**  
*Office of the Secretary*  
*Harold Runnels Building*  
**1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110**  
**Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110**  
**Telephone (505) 827-2855**  
**Fax (505) 827-2836**



**RON CURRY**  
SECRETARY

**DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE**  
DEPUTY SECRETARY

January 4, 2006  
Immediate Release

Contact: Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director  
Phone: (505) 827-0314

### **Secretary Ron Curry Announces \$500,000 for City of Elephant Butte Regional Wastewater Facility**

(Santa Fe, NM) — New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry plans to finalize a \$500,000 loan agreement with City of Elephant Butte officials on Thursday afternoon.

“Governor Richardson has made improving New Mexico’s water and wastewater infrastructure one of his top priorities,” Secretary Curry said. “Elephant Butte is one of the largest cities in New Mexico without a centralized sewer collection and wastewater treatment facility. Now, this money from the state’s Rural Infrastructure Program will be used to plan, design and build a wastewater treatment facility that will help keep the area’s groundwater clean while protecting the reservoir’s water quality, as well.”

A signing ceremony will take place at **1 p.m. on Thursday, January 5, at the Elephant Butte Municipal Building.**

In New Mexico, septic tanks have contaminated more groundwater than all other sources of pollution combined. As cities grow and population densities increase, conversion to centralized wastewater treatment facilities helps ensure the state’s groundwater resources are protected.

“About 90 percent of the state’s drinking water comes from groundwater, so we are committed to protecting this critical resource,” Secretary Curry said.

The Rural Infrastructure Program is a state-funded revolving loan program, administered by NMED and aimed at funding water development and wastewater facility projects. Elephant Butte’s loan is set at 3 percent interest and is payable over a 20-year period.

For more information, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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